

SEMI-TROPICAL  
BEDDING  
AND  
CARPET GARDENING

BY  
GEORGE MOORE.

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MONTREAL

1888.

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# **SEMI-TROPICAL** **≡ Bedding and Carpet Gardening ≡**

BY

**GEORGE MOORE,**  
**HORTICULTURIST.**

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A concise treatise on the best method to derive pleasure from the cultivation of the Flower Garden during the Summer months, thus adding to the beauty and value of the homestead.



Respectfully dedicated by permission to

**COLONEL RHODES, of Quebec,**

whose interest in the science of Floriculture has been the means of raising it in the estimation of the Canadian public, and thus encouraging a branch of industry which contributes to the pleasure of the wealthy, and to the refinement and consequently the welfare of all classes of the community.

MONTREAL, 1888.

" Methinks I see great Dioclesian walk  
 " In the Salonian garden's shade,  
 " Which by his own imperial hand was made,  
 " I see him smile, methinks, as he does talk  
 " With the ambassadors who come in vain  
 " T'entice him to a throne again,  
 " If, I my friends " (said he) " should to you show  
 " All the delights which in these gardens grow,  
 " Tis likelier, much that you should with me stay  
 " Than 'tis that you should carry me away ;  
 " And trust me not, my friends, if every day,  
 " I walk not here with more delight  
 " Than ever, after the most happy sight,  
 ! In triumph to the Capitol I rode  
 " To thank the gods, and to be thought myself almost a god."

" COWLEY."

# SEMI-TROPICAL AND BEDDING

OR

## CARPET GARDENING.

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During the last half century, gardening for pleasure has received an impetus by something that was not understood or practised by our forefathers, namely,—the use of plants for out-door decoration, which were grown under glass, and were only of interest as botanical specimens or embellishments of the drawing-room, table, or conservatory.

About the year 1830, massing in beds of separate colors was adopted in some of the large establishments of the Old World, and the effect produced was so dazzling and satisfactory as to make this style of gardening popular with all lovers of the beautiful.

In those days there were but a small number of species that could be used to produce the desired effect ; but since the introduction of plants, the foliage of which is of color so brilliant as to outrival many flowers, and which improves in beauty and brightness as long as the frost keeps away ; another new impetus has been given to the practice of bedding out and another name added, that of " Carpet-bedding," because, by proper and skilful arrangement and attention, the beds are made to imitate the patterns of the finest carpet, or tapestry work. Continual improvements are being effected, and many of the tropical plants, such as Cannas, Caladiums, Drascenas, Musas, Bambusas, etc., are used with striking



results, and garden scenery produced in our Northern climate during the summer months, such as could be enjoyed previously by residents of tropical regions only.

People with even small gardens can now derive pleasure from a bed of massed flowers, or foliage plants, when well grown, but many are doomed to loss and disappointment because they leave the planting and arrangement to some inexperienced man, who may pretend to know his business, but ought rather to be employed where education and skill are not of so much consequence to the result of his labor.

To attain success the following FIVE conditions must be observed:—

*First.* PREPARATION OF THE BED.—The form being decided upon, which is a matter of taste, together with the situation it is to occupy, dig out the earth to the depth of 2 or 2½ feet. If the top soil is good 6 or 8 inches deep, keep it separate for future use, carting away all the poor soil to the required depth, then to that reserved add well decayed sod, two parts, and thoroughly decomposed manure, one part; mixing and perfectly incorporating the whole; with this compost fill up the bed. This should be done in the autumn, or as early as possible in the spring, so that the earth may be well settled before planting time: then, if the bed is too low, a coating of finer material should be added. The usual method of making the beds has been to have the surface *convex* or almost *conical*; this is a grievous error, because in that case the edges get the moisture and the centre is always dry; consequently the plants in it do not thrive, therefore the surface should be perfectly flat and on a level with the grass.

*Second.* PREPARATION OF THE PLANTS.—The usual style in which bedding plants are grown and put on the

market is to be deprecated as a fraud upon the purchaser, leading to useless expense and vexation. The object with too many growers is to produce a large number of plants in a given space, so as to make the most money regardless of future results; therefore they crowd their plants into small pots, and these into frames from which they are never removed until sold. The roots have all struck through the bottom of the pot, and the growth, having been formed too rapidly, is wanting in the natural vigour which it should possess before final removal, hence the plants receive a check which, if they survive at all, it takes them the best part of the growing season to recover from. It will hence be apparent that plants for bedding out should be carefully cultivated and prepared for immediate use before leaving the hands of the cultivator for their summer quarters, out-door, and then no delay in their growth will take place.

*Third.* SELECTION OF PLANTS.—The planting time having arrived (which will be regulated by the season, but generally will be the last week in May or the first in June,) decide upon what you propose to plant, if you have no plan previously arranged; then make your selection of good strong healthy plants, stocky and well grown, not tall, weak, drawn-up ones which will require stakes to keep them from flopping down, or will fade under the first ray of sun that strikes them. All, except those required for edging (*Centaureas* excepted) should be in 4 inch pots, bushy and dwarf, with 6 to 7 branches on each; these may be planted one foot apart every way, and will fill up more space and give better satisfaction than the poor, miserable things with only 1 or 2 shoots from 3 inch pots, which to fill the beds will take double the number, although they might cost only half the price. Of course the edging plants may be grown in small pots and will be planted 4 or 5 inches apart.

Amongst the varieties best adapted for large beds or masses of flowers are the following : Geraniums (double and single), which should be planted separately ; Bouquet, Dahlias, Lantanas, Salvias, Petunias, Phloxes, Asters, Stocks, etc.

Those for smaller beds are : Ageratum, Heliotrope, Pansies, Lobelia, Verbena, Alyssum, etc.

For foliage beds of large dimensions : Achyranthes, Cannas, Caladium, Dracena, Coleus, Centaureas, etc.

And for smaller foliage beds : Altanthera, Echeveria, Mesembryanthemum, Sempervivum, etc.

Details of varieties can be found described in the Catalogues of Florists.

*Fourth.* PLANTING.—This should be done carefully. The plants being placed conveniently in the vicinity of the bed, give them a thorough soaking, and let them stand an hour or so that the balls may be perfectly saturated before turning them out ; then knock them out of the pots, carefully loosening the roots with the fingers before planting ; with a trowel in one hand and the plant in the other, make the hole and put in the plant about an inch deeper than it stood in the pot, pressing the earth firmly round it. When the bed is finished, take a watering pot with a moderately fine sprinkler and give it a good watering to settle the soil about the plants and to wash off any dirt that may have adhered to the leaves in the process of removal. A light sprinkling for two or three evenings in succession will be all the watering required, unless in exceptionally dry seasons.

*Fifth.* AFTER CARE.—This applies more especially to the foliage and carpet beds, as the flower beds will require but little attention, except keeping free from weeds, and an occasional stirring of the surface until it is covered by the plants.

The care of the foliage beds consists in a proper atten-



tion to the pinching off of the terminal shoots of the outer rows about twice as often as the inner ones, so as to get the centre the highest, and produce the effect of *convexity*, which if attempted by raising the bed in the centre with loam would be a mistake for the reasons above stated.

This pinching should be vigilantly attended to when required until the first of August, after which it will be no longer necessary.

Growers will do well to keep a reserve of plants to fill up any vacancies which may occur through accidents as a blank space would mar the effect throughout the remainder of the season.

There are some situations, being partially shaded, which are not suitable for other plants, but would be admirably adapted to the growth of *Fuchsias*. In such a place a bed prepared with rich, light soil and well decayed manure could be planted, taking a plant 4 feet high for the centre and reducing the height gradually to one foot for the outside row, placing the plants a foot apart and neatly staking them. If all are in bloom when planted they will remain so until frost, and will give a magnificent display.

The use of *annual* plants in bedding should not be overlooked as amongst them are some of the chief beauties Flora bestows upon us. These however should be properly grown and transplanted from the seed bed before supplied to the customer, to insure success; for if they become drawn by too close proximity to each other they are rendered worthless and only cause disappointment.

The Asters, Stocks, Phloxes, Dianthus, Zinnia, and some others are admirably adapted for grouping, and if properly grown will by their beauty and perfume make most valuable acquisitions to the flower garden.

It is by no means to be inferred that the system of mass-

ing or grouping plants in the pleasure grounds should entirely supersede the old fashioned mixed borders of HERBACEOUS perennials, Roses, Lilies, etc., which have a charm their diversity invests them with, and which, if not so effective as a whole, are nevertheless full of interest to the lover of flowers, and therefore should have a place in every well arranged garden.

Roses especially should have their share in the garden adornments, not only in the mixed borders, but in groups or beds, because by this means the harmony and contrast of color is better displayed than when planted apart from each other, and Roses are now so cheap that they are within the reach of all.

Rustic flower stands or vases may be introduced according to the taste of owner with good effect, also baskets filled with hanging and other plants may be suspended from the eaves of verandahs, alcoves, etc,

*Finally.* The expense of preparing the beds in the manner recommended should not deter any one from adopting it, because what is worth doing is worth doing well, and the ultimate cost would not be much, if any greater; the richness of the soil would obviate the necessity of incessant watering.

Neither should the extra price the larger plants are worth be a consideration, because they would cover double the space of the small ones, and while the old maxim that "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever," is true, an attempt to produce it and a failure to do so for the want of proper management is a cause of vexation and annoyance instead.

' Not useless are ye, Flowers ! though made for pleasure ;  
" Blooming in field and grove, by day and night,  
" From every source your sanction bids me treasure  
    " Harmless delight."

" Were I, O God in churchless lands remaining,  
" Far from all voice of teachers or divine preachers  
" My soul would find in flowers of Thy ordaining  
    " Priests, sermons, shrines."

" HORACE SMITH."

# WILLIAM EVANS,

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    " The floor of natures temple tessellate

" What numerous emblems of instructive duty

    " Your forms create."

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" Or else the calm delight the garden yields  
" The gay parterre with foliage rich and gay,  
" And florets opening to the light of day."

G. M.

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**AND**  
**=ORNAMENTAL=**  
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